

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02

AID-05 /064 W

----- 084389

R 212133Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2526

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PGOV PORG MX

SUBJECT: PROSPECTS FOR A US STUDIES CENTER IN MEXICO

1. DESPITE FREQUENCY OF CROSS-CULTURAL CONTACT AND INFLUENCE OF US ON MEXICAN SOCIETY, THERE IS NO ACADEMIC CENTER FOR US STUDIES ANYWHERE IN MEXICO. THE NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OFFERS ONLY A FEW COURSES DEALING WITH ANY ASPECT OF THE US. WHILE THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS GRADUATE INSTITUTE, EL COLEGIO DE MEXICO, HAS A CENTER FOR ASIAN AND NORTH AFRICAN STUDIES, IT TOO LACKS DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA ABOUT US.

2. IN A BREAKFAST MEETING JAN 13, A LOPEZ PORTILLO CAMPAIGN AIDE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THE PRI CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT IS VERY INTERESTED IN ESTABLISHING AN "INSTITUTE FOR U.S. STUDIES" IN MEXICO. LOPEZ PORTILLO IS CONCERNED THAT, WHILE VARIOUS MEXICAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT THE US IN PARTICULAR AREAS, THERE EXISTS NO SINGLE BODY TO CORRELATE DATA. HE BELIEVES AN INSTITUTE WHICH COULD STUDY U.S. SOCIETY AS A WHOLE WOULD FURTHER IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS.

3. ACCORDINGLY, IN A CAMPAIGN APPEARANCE AT EL COLEGIO DE MEXICO ON JAN 15, LOPEZ PORTILLO, REFERRING TO THE ASIAN-
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NORTH AFRICAN CENTER, REMARKED THAT MUCH RESEARCH WAS BEING

DIRECTED EASTWARD, "...WHEN IT WOULD BE MORE USEFUL TO KNOW
AND ANALYZE THE SOCIAL MYSTERY CALLED NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY."

4. IN RESPONSE, VICTOR URQUIDI, PRESIDENT OF EL COLEGIO,
AGREED THAT THERE WAS NO ON-GOING RESEARCH INTO US SOCIETY
AND ADDED THAT IN ALL OF LATIN AMERICA THERE IS NOT ONE
CENTER WHICH EMPLOYS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TOWARD
STUDY OF THE US. DR URQUIDI PROMISED, HOWEVER, THAT EL COLEGIO
DE MEXICO WOULD BEGIN SUCH AN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY
WITHIN A FEW MONTHS.

5. COMMENT: AN INSTITUTE OF US STUDIES COULD GREATLY HELP
MEXICO UNDERSTAND US ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS, WHICH ARE
FREQUENTLY MISINTERPRETED BY MEXICAN JOURNALISTS, POLITICIANS
AND EDUCATED PUBLIC AT LARGE. LOPEZ PORTILLO HAS APPARENTLY
DECIDED THAT ONE NEGATIVE ASPECT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS IS
THAT MEXICO DOES NOT SUFFICIENTLY UNDERSTAND THE SOCIETY
WITH WHICH IT IS DEALING. WE INTEND TO CONTINUE TO MONITOR
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROPOSAL AND TO RESPOND TO MEXICAN
INITIATIVES WITH LOW-KEY OFFERS OF COOPERATION.
THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICES, STUDIES, EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, SCHOOLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MEXICO00852
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760024-0319
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760135/aaaabeta.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 JUL 2004 by saccheem>; APPROVED <06 JUL 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROSPECTS FOR A US STUDIES CENTER IN MEXICO
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PORG, SEDU, MX, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006